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ABSTRACT

Organized labor's relationship to vocational education has always been one of wholehearted support and encouragement. Since the passage of the Smith-Hughes Act in 1917, the American Federation of Labor (AFL) has supported state efforts to develop vocational education. Labor has strongly supported apprenticeship programs that included cooperative relationships among the schools, employers, unions, and equipment manufacturers. Recognizing the dependence of vocational education upon its relationships with organized labor, the American Vocational Association created its Labor-Management Relations Committee in 1954. Since that time, various unions have worked to improve vocational education dealing with their particular trade, and the AFL-CIO has vigorously opposed proposed cutbacks in funding for vocational education. Historically, the AFL-CIO has urged that vocational education students receive a comprehensive education with emphasis on basic skills education rather than on a program that is too job specific. Despite labor's continued support of vocational education, the incorporation of instructional materials dealing with labor into vocational programs is the exception rather than the rule. Continued strengthening of the partnership between vocational education and organized labor is vital in light of the current need to retool and to retrain the work force in the United States, and government leadership is essential to achieve this goal. (MN)

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Organized Labor's Linkage with Vocational Education

Dorothy Shields

Occasional Paper No. 110

THE NATIONAL CENTER
FOR RESEARCH IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION
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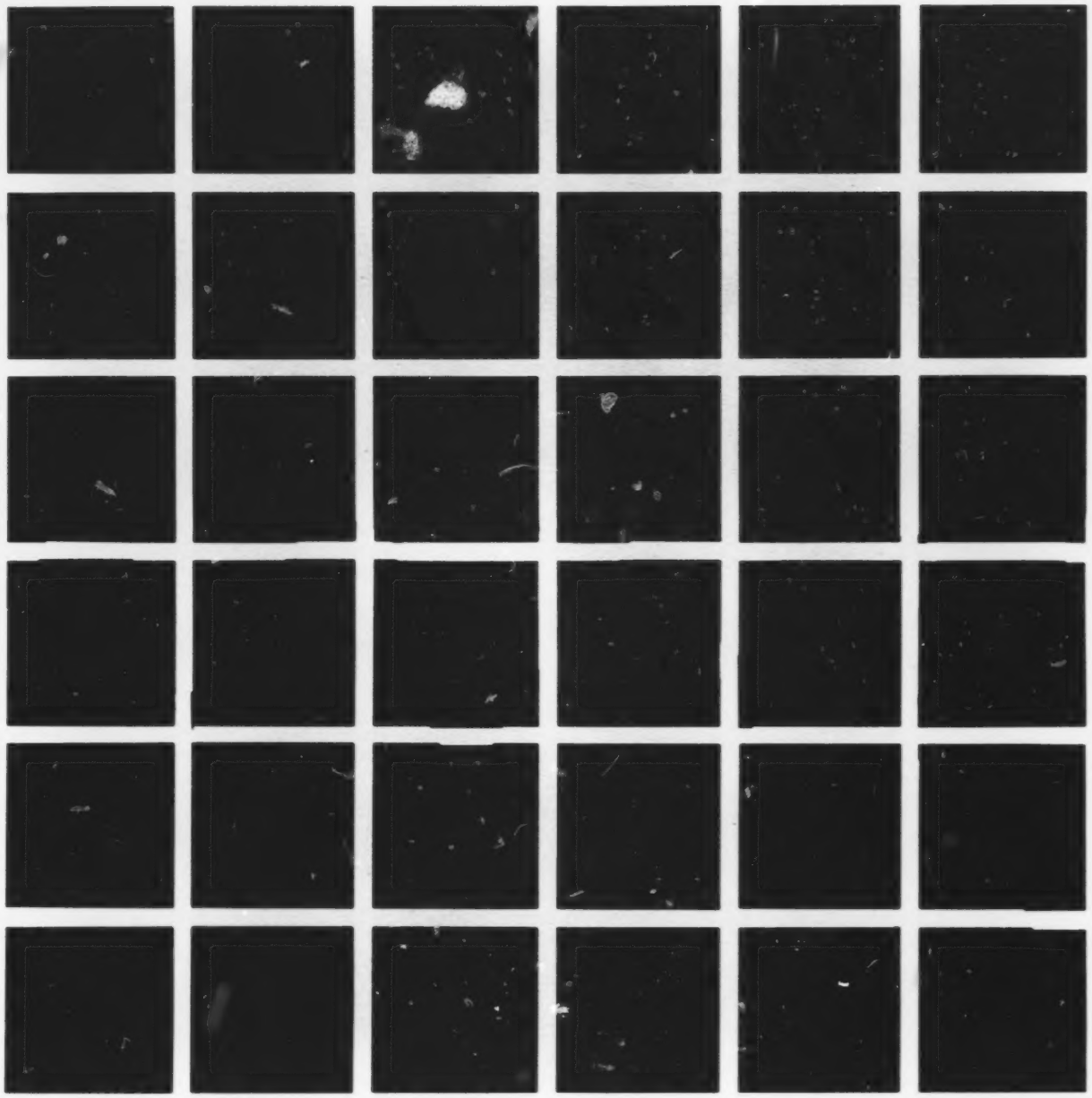

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Occasional Paper No. 110

ORGANIZED LABOR'S LINKAGE WITH VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

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1986

FOREWORD

Collaboration between business, industry, government, labor, and education has become increasingly important as our society is called on to meet the rapidly changing requirements of the labor market. Thus, this seminar on linkages between organized labor and vocational education is especially timely, and Dorothy Shields is highly qualified to address this issue.

Dorothy received her bachelor of art's degree from Trinity College in Washington, D.C. She was employed in the public relations department of W.R. Grace and Company in New York City, and then returned to Trinity College for 8 years, where she served as assistant director of development, as well as director of public relations.

In 1972, Dorothy joined the AFL-CIO as education staff representative and became assistant director of education 5 years later. With her appointment as director of education in 1980, a position she still holds, Dorothy Shields became the first woman to head an AFL-CIO department.

The AFL-CIO Department of Education is responsible for the advocacy of the federation's strong support of a public education system of equity and quality from elementary school through higher education. Besides promoting these policies, the AFL-CIO Department of Education is responsible for developing programs and materials in labor education. The department offers assistance to AFL-CIO members ranging from shop steward training to information on international affairs.

Dorothy Shields has served on numerous panels, advisory committees, and boards of directors in various fields. Among these are the following:

- The Secretary of the Navy's Advisory Board on Education and Training
- Board of Directors, National Women's Education Fund
- Board of Trustees, American Association of Community and Junior Colleges (AACJC)
- National Commission on Secondary Vocational Education
- National Center for Research in Vocational Education Advisory Council

The Ohio State University and the National Center for Research in Vocational Education are happy to present Dorothy Shields's talk on "Organized Labor's Linkages with Vocational Education" as it was delivered at the National Center.

Robert E. Taylor
Executive Director
The National Center for Research
in Vocational Education

ORGANIZED LABOR'S LINKAGE WITH VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

The American labor movement has always been a champion of better schools. Unions and workers' parties in the early 19th century were determined that the promise of American democracy should be fulfilled in terms of equality of opportunity and the uprooting of class privileges. One of the deepest of these convictions among early unionists was that the responsibilities of a democratic society make it imperative that all citizens be educated.

The Workingmen's Party, organized in New York City in 1829, included as one of its principal planks a demand for a school system "that shall unite under the same roof the children of the poor man and the rich, the widow's charge and the orphan, where the road to distinction shall be superior industry, virtue and acquirement without reference to descent." Similar calls for a free and universal system of schooling came in the same year. These were followed by a national labor convention held in New York during 1834 that included in its list of recommendations the establishment of an "equal, universal, republican system of education."[1]

This is very important to our labor people. Whenever they get involved in public education discussions, they speak from a sense of having a vested interest in the system over a long period of time and as part of their history.

For more than a century and a half, organized labor's relationship to education, including vocational education, has been one of wholehearted support and encouragement. The labor movement in the United States has never slackened in its close attention to educational problems. From its founding in 1881 the American Federation of Labor (AFL) adopted resolutions calling for compulsory education laws as well as laws against child labor. "The damnable system which permits young and innocent children to have their lives worked out of them in factories, mills, workshops, and stores, is one of the very worst of labor's grievances," AFL President Samuel Gompers told delegates to the 1893 Convention of the Federation.[2]

This is an arena where we still have work to do. As we look around the country, we see the move toward exploited labor practices against young people, particularly in the areas of heavy population of immigrants to this country.

Some of the early unions such as the Bricklayers, Pressmen, and Typographers established their own vocational schools by the late 19th century. The success of these early efforts encouraged interest in "industrial education" throughout the labor movement. By the early 1900s, AFL committees on education were regularly reporting to the AFL convention on the status of vocational education. The 1907 AFL convention, for example, recognized the formation of the National Society for the Promotion of Industrial Education. The American Federation of Labor strongly supported the National Society and endorsed its objective of "raising the standard of industrial education and the teaching of the higher techniques of our various industries." John Golden, president of the United Textile Workers of America, commenting on the program proposed by the National Society, stated that "in such a movement I feel safe in saying organized labor is with you heart and soul."[3]

The regular AFL Committee on Education reports during the formative years of the vocational education movement helped shape the final language of the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917. The AFL favored the establishment of vocational education in the public schools because such a program was a "public necessity" that should be conducted at "public expense." Such a program, the AFL repeatedly stressed, should include competently trained teachers and a curriculum having instruction in English, mathematics, physics, chemistry, elementary mechanics, drawing, history of the trade, economics, and the philosophy of collective bargaining. There should also be advisory boards with representatives from business and labor so that the schools would maintain close contact with actual working conditions.[4]

Following passage of the Smith-Hughes Act, all affiliates of the AFL were urged to support state efforts to develop vocational education. Affiliates were also urged to prevent any attempt to use vocational education for the purposes of exploitation. The vocational education program supported by the Smith-Hughes Act was regarded by labor as *preapprentice* training. For the AFL, the new law helped to secure a broader base for the superior craftsman, and labor encouraged workers to take advantage of the new vocational education programs.[5]

From the beginning, organized labor saw the new vocational education program as much more than a way to teach workers how to be more efficient. Mathew Woll, president of the Photoengravers Union and a member of the AFL Committee on Education during the 1920s, informed vocational educators that "we want education to continue to establish a habit of mind that is creative which will find expression in every relation in life. . . . Vocational education should make the whole work process educational in character." This would happen only with the cooperation of labor, management, and education.[6]

During the 1930s organized labor strongly advocated the use of vocational training and retraining in hopes that vocational education could make a contribution toward relieving the problems of unemployment. Once again labor called for a cooperative effort among all parties involved in vocational education. Mathew Woll, speaking at an American Vocational Association meeting during December 1931 in New York City, called for a joint effort "permitting the experience of industrialists, labor and executives to enrich and direct [the] course" of vocational education.[7]

Though many unions developed apprenticeship programs in the 19th century, the first national apprenticeship program was not established until the passage of the Fitzgerald Act of 1937. In 1939, the labor movement and the U.S. Office of Education jointly promoted the International Labor Organization's recommendations for apprenticeship programs. These recommendations included the following: (a) written definitions of apprenticeship, (b) specific periods of time for apprenticeship in each trade, (c) wages to be paid during an apprenticeship program, (d) provision for related instruction, and (e) joint employer-employee committee approval.[8]

Labor strongly supported apprenticeship programs that included cooperative relationships between the schools, employers, unions, and equipment manufacturers. The courses were expected to be up-to-date and the instructors were to be experts in their trade. In addition, union involvement in apprenticeship programs led to labor support for journeyman retraining courses such as were developed at the Washburne Trade School in Chicago.[9]

In 1938, the AFL issued a *Guide for Vocational Education*, which was distributed to labor and education groups throughout the United States. The guide described a general rationale for vocational education and its importance to youth, the economy, and the welfare of the nation. It also was critical of proposals to compromise quality in vocational education programs and to produce large numbers of low-skilled workers. The final part of the report renewed the call to affiliates to

get involved in vocational education programs on the local level. The success of vocational education was seen as a joint responsibility, with the support of trade and industrial education by labor as an essential part of that joint responsibility.[10]

Labor's call for organizational input into vocational education programming through participation in advisory committees has been continuous and persistent. There have been problems, however, in implementing this policy because it did not always measure up to labor's expectations. The AFL frequently called on its affiliates to participate in local advisory committees. An agreement between the AFL and the U.S. Office of Education in 1942 called for vocational education programs to be established on the basis of actual need and only on the advice and counsel of a representative advisory committee. Though all units of labor were requested to assist in developing such advisory committees, labor did not always participate. The AFL stressed in its reports labor's responsibilities and obligations in response to the sometimes disappointing participation of its affiliates in these advisory committees.[11]

Despite such disappointments, the AFL reaffirmed its faith in vocational education at nearly all of its conventions. It also continued to call for the highest standards for a lifetime of learning. At the 1949 convention, the AFL approved an Executive Council report to the delegates that stated, in part, the following:

> Vocational training, formal and informal, must help establish standards for work proficiency as well as equip the worker for his work. Education must be continuous. Adult education is as essential in our complex society as is elementary education or any other level of education.[12]

Where purposeful joint advisory committees of management and unions were at work, the AFL believed that vocational education programs achieved their greatest success. If the labor movement actively participated in an advisory capacity, then, the AFL firmly believed, real value came to vocational education programs.

Such involvement also led to the AFL calling attention to a "caste system" in the nation's schools. AFL condemned situations where low IQ students were told to take vocational education classes whereas high IQ students were told not to enroll in such classes. AFL also criticized vocational schools and academic schools with different scholastic standings and the "dumping" of students with social behavior problems in vocational education programs.[13]

In 1954, the American Vocational Association (AVA), recognizing the value of improving linkages with other organizations in order to solve problems that were becoming widespread within the vocational education system, created a Labor-Management Relations Committee. Representatives from the AFL, the National Association of Manufacturers, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and the U.S. Departments of Education and Labor attended the meetings of the AVA's Labor-Management Relations Committee. Membership for the committee was selected from states with good relationships with both management and labor. The creation of AVA's Labor-Management Relations Committee was still another indication of the dependence of vocational education upon its relationships with labor and management.[14]

The labor movement has continuously looked for ways to expand its relationship with vocational education. In 1962, for example, the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) and the U.S. Office of Education announced a joint training agreement to improve training in the electrical trades. Prior to this agreement, the U.S. Office of Education had appointed a panel of consultants on vocational education to make a national study of the field, which labor had wanted

for many years. During the same year that the IBEW announced its joint training agreement, the AFL-CIO Committee on Education presented its views to the panel in a paper called *The Changing Needs of Vocational Education*.[15]

This paper reviewed labor's support for vocational education over the years. It also identified some major problems that vocational education needed to solve in the next decade. These problems included better training for entry-level jobs in a rapidly changing economy, teaching new skills to workers whose jobs were eliminated due to technological innovation, improving training for teachers, and keeping up with technical progress. The committee report prophetically stated that "today training is never finished. To remain employed a worker must train all his [sic] working life to keep up and to anticipate the technological changes of his occupation."[16]

When the Vocational Education Act of 1963 was passed, the AFL-CIO convention delegates approved of the shift in emphasis "away from outdated job skills into teaching of new, modern, up-to-date skills needed in the rapidly changing American economy." By 1968, however, the AFL-CIO Executive Council had come to agree with the conclusion of the National Advisory Council on Vocational Education that "the promise of the Act has not been realized." The Executive Council urged increased funding for vocational education programs.[17]

The Vocational Education Amendments of 1968, passed later that year, provided funds for the disadvantaged, consumer education of the poor, innovative programs, new curricula testing, and new testing methods. More meaningful responsibilities were given to the national and state advisory councils. The AFL-CIO hailed the legislation as a "landmark in the history of vocational legislation." But the AFL-CIO also expressed its deep concern over then-President Richard Nixon's withholding of funds authorized by the 1968 amendments.[18]

In response to these proposed cutbacks, the AFL-CIO and other educational organizations formed a coalition group in 1969 called the Committee for Full Funding of Education Programs. This committee, known today as the Committee for Education Funding, is made up of over 80 organizations concerned with federal funding. During the Nixon administration, the committee was instrumental in successfully lobbying Congress to override Nixon's withholding of funds for education programs.[19]

Through the Nixon and Ford administrations, the AFL-CIO vigorously fought against attempts to eliminate categorical funding and to lump vocational education funds into block grants that would have provided significantly reduced funding. When President Ford vetoed the Education Appropriation Bill, the AFL-CIO Executive Council publicly called for the veto to be overridden. The council stated that the "AFL-CIO, its members and their families have a vital stake in education. The future development of this nation's human resources is under attack by an Administration that has no faith in America's strength." Congress was called upon to "override this ill conceived veto by the President."[20]

With the passage of the Education Amendments of 1976 (supported by the AFL-CIO), and the beginning of the Carter administration, the AFL-CIO assessed the result of the struggle for adequate education funding during the Nixon-Ford years. Organized labor urged President Carter to address the needs of vocational education students working on out-of-date equipment, the "tracking" of such students, and the inadequate funding for vocational programs. The AFL-CIO urged appropriations at the fully authorized level and full implementation of language concerning the role of advisory committees. Throughout the Carter administration, the AFL-CIO would continue to lobby for increased federal funding for vocational education "in order for the Nation to build on the solid foundation created by the Vocational Education Act of 1963."[21]

During the past 3-4 years, the AFL-CIO has steadily called for a substantive leadership program on the federal level to "enable the nation's public education system to educate and re-train America's current and future workforce." Organized labor has strongly supported current efforts to reauthorize the Vocational Education Act at higher appropriation levels in order to provide better education and training related to job opportunities. Furthermore, Congress has been asked to provide the means to enable vocational education to train students to use high-tech equipment; to provide new initiatives for the retraining of adults; to provide support for the training, retention, and upgrading of teachers; and to continue and strengthen the requirements for labor representation on local advisory councils.[22]

This is somewhat difficult because this administration has determined that the legislation presently on the books does not include or mean to have representatives of organized labor on the National Advisory Council for Vocational Education. Those members of organized labor who served on that council and who served on the Career Education Advisory Council were rather summarily removed at the time of the new administration.

The AFL-CIO has vigorously fought against the recently proposed vocational education funding cutbacks and has reaffirmed its historic concern with the development of the vocational education system. In response to President Reagan's proposed first budget, the delegates to the AFL-CIO convention meeting during November 1981 called on Congress to do the following:

- Address the particular needs of minority and inner-city youngsters for equal access to vocational education institution.
- Consider the resources needed for guidance counseling, teacher preparation, and research.
- Appropriate and authorize adequate funding levels for the purchase of new equipment and program upgrading due to technological changes.
- Address the questions of sex equity in all vocational education programs.
- Maintain the federal leadership role by rejecting the block grant proposals.

They conclude with:

> We ask that the same resources that are allotted to college-bound students be allocated to those students in the vocational education system. For too long this system has been considered inferior to the general education offerings. We continue to believe that a vocational education system that offers a quality program of basic education and general skills will make a significant contribution to alleviating youth unemployment.[23]

Many of these concerns have been high on labor's agenda from its origins in the early 19th century right up to the current emphasis on educational reform. The spate of recent education reform reports, most notably *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Education Reform*, have repeated many of labor's concerns about the public schools. Labor supports the "new" more rigorous academic standards that have been recommended by these reports; however, labor is also concerned that raised academic requirements not have the unintended consequence of making it impossible for vocational education students also to get the education and training they need. The AFL-CIO Executive Council, reporting to the delegates at our convention last year, urged Congress to ensure that "vocational education at all levels should be held to the highest possible standards in both the practical and academic education offered to their students."[24]

The National Academy of Sciences recent report *Education for Tomorrow's Jobs* noted another of labor's historic concerns about access and equity in vocational education.

> If public schools are to accomplish the goals of providing up-to-date and effective vocational education for all students who want it, they should have sufficient resources not only to maintain the good programs they have now but also to modify existing programs and initiate new ones to teach the skills required by employers. They will also need additional money to provide remediation for educationally disadvantaged students.[25]

Education for Tomorrow's Jobs also noted the lower status of vocational education as compared with academic education, especially on the high school level. It urged more collaborative efforts involving business and labor.[26]

Historically, the AFL-CIO and the AFL before it have urged that vocational education students receive a comprehensive education with emphasis on basic education skills rather than a program that is too job specific. Broad education with transferable skills and preparation for continual learning has been labor's prescription for a quality vocational education program.

One of the most recent in the flood of reform reports, *High Schools and the Changing Workplace*, has reinforced labor's position. This report recommends that the graduates of American high schools need to be adaptable to changes in the workplace more than they need any particular job skill. "Core competencies" are the most important skills high school students should master. These skills include,

> the ability to read, write, reason and compute; an understanding of American social and economic life; a knowledge of the basic principles of the physical and biological sciences; experience with cooperation and conflict resolution in groups; and possession of attitudes and personal habits that make for a dependable, responsible, adaptable and informed citizen.[27]

It makes a fascinating comparison to look at this most recent of recommendations for high school students alongside of the AFL prescription for quality vocational education programs drafted in 1909:

> The course of instruction in such a school should be English, mathematics, physics, chemistry, elementary mechanics, and drawing, the shop instruction for particular trades, and for each trade represented, the drawing, mathematics, mechanical, physical and biological science applicable to the trade, the history of that trade, and a sound system of economics, including and emphasizing the philosophy of collective bargaining.[28]

One of the issues directly referred to in the 1909 AFL statement and referred to in the National Academy statement concerns collective bargaining and "conflict resolution in groups." We believe that all students should have knowledge of the contributions of workers, the history of organized labor, and the development of one of the most successful systems anywhere in the world of group conflict resolution, known as collective bargaining.

Despite the clear and pressing need for vocational education students to learn about collective bargaining and the contributions of unions, the actual classroom experience of such students can be described as one in which transmission to them of such vital knowledge is more the exception than the rule. In 1963, George Meany, writing in the *Teachers College Journal* stated,

> organized labor is a part of the very fabric of our society and it ought to be an important part of any serious attempt to understand that society. In most schools today, this has not happened.[29]

In 1967, Will Scoggins, in his *Labor and Learning: Public School Treatment of the World of Work*, after making an in-depth investigation of social studies textbooks, concluded, "The evidence of an antilabor bias is abundant."[30]

In 1973, Nat Goldfinger, director of the AFL-CIO Department of Research, at a conference on labor and the schools, reported that,

> such textbook treatment of trade unions, collective bargaining and the world of work has improved very little, if at all, since Scoggins presented his report. It is usually absent entirely or utterly biased.[31]

In 1982, I believe, a Rutger's graduate student completed his thesis that essentially says the same thing. People from the American Federation of Teachers have worked on this continually—many of them on what I would call an informal basis—and have come to the same conclusions. We are either not mentioned, or, where we are mentioned, done so in a rather biased way.

This distorted view of our economy and of American society in the schools is aggravated by the flood of materials sent to teachers. Leading corporations and other management-oriented organizations, such as the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Manufacturers, lean on the virtues of free enterprise, which treats labor either in a negative manner or not at all.

When vocational education programs do develop materials about labor, they are usually breaking new ground. Two examples of such materials can be found in Maine and New York City. They both provide information and activities to make students think, but *not* to make students think a certain way. There is a conscious effort "to balance the labor and management perspectives and to provide opportunities to explain and express the point of view of business, the employer, and management, as well as dissent on labor union and labor issues."[32]

The materials prepared by the Bureau of Labor Education of the University of Maine may be used as an integrated course of instruction or each lesson plan may be used separately and independently. The teachers' manual is divided into three units: "Making a Living," which stresses personal skills such as budgeting and job hunting; "Labor Law," covering federal and state laws such as Workers' Compensation, OSHA, child labor, and minimum wage; and "Labor Relations," which includes material on labor history, legal definitions and regulations, grievances and arbitration, and collective bargaining. Another booklet used in conjunction with the teacher's manual is called *A Worker's Guide to Labor Law*.[33]

The Bureau of Labor Education has also developed *Recognition: A Source Book on Labor for Teachers and Students*. On the title page of this booklet is a statement that reads in part,

> this second edition represents a continuing attempt to secure "recognition" for organized labor in the learning process conducted by Maine's public schools. For too long the efforts and contributions of labor in seeking and securing economic and social justice for all Americans has been ignored or dealt with unfairly. "Recognition" is a small, but necessary step in obtaining for labor the credit and perspective it so richly deserves.[34]

In New York City, Open Doors, an organization sponsored by the Economic Development Council and the New York City Board of Education, used classroom teachers to develop a resources book called *Labor Unions: Getting It Together*. Again, the materials were designed to be used in sequence or separately. This resource book introduces the study of labor unions and helps explain the "why" of the labor movement. It describes collective bargaining, in terms of both law and practice, and it includes case studies of actual unions, their history, membership services, the struggles for political and civil rights, and more.[35]

Another of Open Door's classroom materials is called *What's It Like to Work in New York City?* One chapter, "What's It Like to Work at a Union?", describes the overall structure of the labor movement in New York City. It also provides a more detailed look at one local union, its work, its employees, the work atmosphere, and descriptions of the background of some of the staff.[36]

One might also note the summer 1984 edition of *VICA*, the journal of the Vocational Industrial Clubs of America, which features "A Look at Unions." Over four pages of this tabloid-sized journal examined the history of the labor movement, Samuel Gompers, the union label, child labor in the 19th century, and workers' rights and responsibilities. A companion publication, *VICA: Professional Edition*, devoted three pages to materials on "Teaching about Labor."[37]

These examples, however, are exceptions to the rule. They are more the potential than the reality. They point to the critical need for significantly stronger collaboration between organized labor and vocational education. That is why we are encouraged by the National Center's recent grant proposal to develop a labor studies curriculum. We firmly believe that the more one knows about the American labor movement, the better one understands American society. The origins, growth, and development of unions are a vital part of the democratic process. We would welcome many more proposals within vocational education that acknowledge the premise in the National Center's grant which noted that,

> because of their imminent entry into the work force, vocational/technical secondary school students need an in-depth knowledge of how they might functionally participate in the labor market. In particular, many students in trade and industrial programs will be directly affected by trade unions. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, of thirty-four industrial categories analyzed, unions represent over seventy-five percent in transportation, construction, and mining occupations and over fifty percent in transportation, equipment, metals and manufacturing occupations. Davis writes, a significant number of vocational students in trade and industrial education programs will work in occupations that are highly unionized. Therefore, vocational education programs should include considerable information on unions in their curricula.[38]

Also stated is the significant contribution of organized labor to the American standard of living as well as the substantial support of the labor movement for vocational education. It has been acknowledged that the American labor movement has had "a profound influence on daily life. Without a total picture upon which to base their career decisions, vocational students are ill-prepared to participate in the labor market. Their potential for industrial contribution is seriously impaired.[39] Let us hope that this pilot program will be a new beginning for a more inclusive curriculum for all vocational education students.

Today, we need to retool and retrain in order to put America back on the leading edge of industrial change, and that will require a new level of collaboration between industry, labor, government, and the schools. Labor has a long-standing commitment and record in cooperation

and collaborative efforts in education and training. As Ken Edwards, director of the Skill Improvement Department, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, stated last year in a presentation at the National Center, "Organized labor is ready and willing to cooperate with vocational education." The bottom line for labor concerning cooperation, however, is how such partnerships or collaboration benefits workers.[40]

Jack Reihl, secretary-treasurer of the Wisconsin State AFL-CIO and former member of the National Advisory Council on Vocational Education, has raised questions about the current call for "partnerships" involving the private sector and the schools. Writing in the *1984 Yearbook of the American Vocational Association*, he warns,

> if private industry avoids working closely with organized labor and attempts to shape vocational education around a narrow and self-serving agenda, then collaboration will have a hollow meaning. Increasingly, working people are asking questions about the quality of life, the nature of work, the impact of technology, and what the future holds. True collaboration—a partnership of several equals—will go a long way toward answering these vital questions.[41]

Government leadership is also essential for such a partnership. A government that gives legitimate and valid credence to unions as workers' representatives and that is established according to the labor laws of the country is necessary. We don't have that kind of leadership with respect to this present administration and with respect to the labor movement at this time.

Certainly, few groups in our society have more of a vital interest in vocational education than do America's labor unions. Organized labor has been among the most active supporters of vocational education through strong lobbying for federal funds for vocational programs and similar support on the state level.

No vocational education program could be complete without exposing students to organized labor's important role in shaping the world of careers. Hardly a town or a village in America now exists without some form of organized labor. If your town has a post office, a telephone exchange, a supermarket, or a school, you have union members living and working there. Every state has central labor councils and a state federation that represent local unions operating in that area. These are resources that should be tapped.

Labor's involvement in vocational education flows from its fundamental support of public education as basic to a democratic society. Organized labor's efforts established today's public school system. And labor's concern for quality workmanship and training, through apprenticeships or other training systems, underlies its support of public vocational education.

The overwhelming majority of students in our public schools are children of working men and women, and organized labor wants these students to get the best that is available. Concern for their own children and concern for the nation has led union members to serve on hundreds of school boards and advisory councils throughout the nation. Local and state labor bodies have worked tirelessly to win better financial support for the schools. Labor representatives help to establish standards and schedules of training for apprenticeship programs. Union representatives contribute to the body of knowledge and research concerning vocational education, help to plan conferences on career guidance, serve on national commissions, develop programs for dislocated workers, and participate in a myriad of other activities that impact on vocational education. The value of organized labor's linkage with vocational education is self-evident. The need to strengthen that linkage in the years ahead is manifestly clear.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Dorothy Shields

Question: In one of your quotations, you mentioned that labor's view of vocational education was preapprenticeship training. Do you think that further work is needed on the articulation between vocational offerings and apprenticeship programs?

Yes, I believe further articulation and cooperation would be beneficial to both groups. I think that there are two issues, that of the relationship between secondary vocational education and apprenticeship and that of postsecondary vocational education and apprenticeship. In the case of secondary schooling, we do view vocational education as preapprenticeship. Vocational students at the secondary level should not be lead to believe their training substitutes for a full apprenticeship program. However, there could be improved articulation between and among the programs so that high school vocational graduates are better prepared for entry into apprenticeship and have a better understanding of the relationship between labor and management in the jointly administered programs. At the postsecondary level, apprenticeship programs can be complementary to other courses and enable young apprentices to work toward not only a journeyman's card but perhaps an associate degree.

Question: In the long run, for example 5 years from now, what role do you see vocational education playing in assisting labor unions with their dislocated workers, particularly by providing training?

In the short and the long run, vocational education's role is to assist labor unions with dislocated workers, those who are losing their jobs by plant closings and so forth. The Jobs Training Partnership Act offers limited help to displaced workers. However, there needs to be more joint planning among business, labor, and government seeking remedies to this problem.

New collective bargaining arrangments such as the one the UAW has negotiated with the auto industry provides many opportunities for their members to select a vocational training of their choice that will be paid for through the jointly administered agreement. In industries that move toward similar agreements, there will be similar oppcrtunities. However, I believe in order for vocational educators to be successful in such arrangements they must do more to learn about how unions operate and convey such information in a positive manner to vocational education students. It is always surprising for me to visit with vocational education students who always want to know how to gain entry into apprenticeship, how to get into a union, and yet know little at all about the structure and role of the labor movement—a legitimate area of study for future workers.

Question: First, I wonder if you could comment on whether the AFL-CIO has taken a position regarding competency-based education. If not, are they considering it? Secondly, I wondered if you could tell us a little bit about the Free Trade Union Institute?

We have not taken a position on competency-based education. Several of our affiliates have worked with competency-based education and others are studying it, but the AFL-CIO has no overall position on the question.

To help the advancement of representative unions in the developing nations, the federation maintains institutes for three continents: the American Institute for Free Labor Development, for Latin America; the African-American Labor Center; and the Asian-American Free Labor Institute. These institutes are engaged in such activities as worker and trade union education, cooperatives, vocational training, credit unions, social and community projects, including housing. The institutes have field offices in the major countries of the three continents. A fourth body, the Free Trade Union Institute, created in 1977 is now handling international labor exchanges and will become the major instrument through which the American labor movement assists trade union development in the Third World and in certain areas of Western Europe. Funds for these purposes come from the National Endowment for Democracy, which was created by Congress in 1983. The AFL-CIO is represented on the Board of the Endowment by President Lane Kirkland and Vice-President Albert Shanker. The activities of all the institutes are coordinated through the Department of International Affairs.

Question: As you pointed out, the *A Nation at Risk* report has prompted many state legislatures to increase graduation requirements, including requiring more academic course work. What could we at the National Center do, either with or independent of the AFL-CIO, to ascertain that vocational education and the leadership building clubs, don't get squeezed out of the public school system?

There is general public acceptance and support for raising academic standards for students. This is a positive movement on behalf of public education and one which we support. What we also support is working creatively within that movement to ensure the maintenance of access and equity for all students.

One of the most effective ways to extend educational reform for all students is to work with it, and to evaluate proposals in terms of academic excellence and equity. Does the reform allow for the students who must work to stay in school? Are all students receiving the counseling they need to be aware of the opportunities and benefits of special programs? Are remedial strategies planned and budgeted for in any reform effort? The Center can be key to tracking and disseminating successful efforts and also for encouraging vocational educators to bring their best experiences to other educators.

Question: What is organized labor's policy on cooperative work experience for secondary programs?

The AFL-CIO supports cooperative work programs with the provision that such programs do not take advantage of students. Several years ago, we cooperated with this Center in establishing guidelines for experiential education programs. The publication which resulted from that study is an excellent one to recommend to educators planning cooperative work experience. We all agreed that the main objective of such programs is education and that they should not be used to bypass fair wage laws.

Question: Can you talk about labor organizations for clerical occupations?

There are several unions organizing members in the clerical field, particularly women. The Office Employees International Union has been working in this area for years. Others include the

Service Employees International Union that joined with the well known Nine-to-Five Organization for Women Workers and created a collective bargaining unit in the Boston Area Local 925 of SEIU. Public Employee Unions, AFSCME and AFGE, all have clerical units. With the concern for pay equity among women workers, clerical organizing will continue to grow.

As a university faculty, you should be aware that many major unions have had their most bitter experiences in trying to organize clerical workers on campuses. University management is often willing to work with unionized faculty, but have great difficulty in extending the right to collective bargaining to their clerical and maintenance people. We would hope that situation would change.

Question: Could you speak briefly on the AFL-CIO's position on tuition tax credits?

The AFL-CIO opposes tuition tax credits and vouchers as ineffective, inefficient, and destructive to proven programs in public institutions. Our public schools, open and available to all our citizens, are deserving of maximum public funding.

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